

# Colour Psychology in Marketing

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## Abstract

How colours can impact and influence customers in their buying decisions have been incessantly a topic of discussion among marketing researchers. This article tries to explore the role of colour psychology in marketing. By understanding the importance of colour psychology in the marketing arena as well as daily life, brands are able to promote their products and thus capture a larger market share. Since it is a psychological concept, it is influenced heavily by variables such as mood, behavior, age, gender, etc. These variables affect how colour is perceived and its relation to the product being marketed.

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## Introduction

Everything has a colour, and the brain relentlessly perceives it in its anecdotal wavelengths and interprets them. The interpretation of colours by the brain is what leads to the provenance of meanings to these colours, something which is both influenced by physics as well as society. Human beings make appraisal of other people or products within 90 seconds, and about 62-90 per cent of the assumption is based on just colour (Singh, 2006). Colour psychology is how colours are attached in explaining the meanings and qualities and how it affects human perceptions.

## Significance and role of colour in marketing

Colour is significant for any company while marketing their products and for creating brand image. Since colours have psychological effects on human behavior, the right choice of colours helps to definitely influence buyers as well as achieve several other marketing agendas. Colours help the brand stand out, create a personality and achieve a familiarity with customers who can recognize the brand just by noticing its signature colours.

Colours in marketing have three main functions – attract potential buyers, influence their mood and behavior in order to persuade a purchase, and to create brand identity which serves as the brand's unique and distinguishing factor. Colours persuade emotions and moods, and shapes customer's behavior and psychology (Khattak, Ali et al. 2018), thus making them a potent tool for marketing. From packaging to logo design to sales promotion, colour choices play an integral factor for such business decisions. As colour is known to influence consumer behavior (Paul & Okan, 2011), marketers use the concept of colour psychology to convert colours into subtle cues. Retail stores use bold colour combinations like red and white in their sales promotions to attract buyers, create a sense of exigency and thus encourage them to buy without much contemplation.

According to Colour psychology, colours have certain meanings which can inflame emotional responses. The colour meanings may differ from culture to culture, but more or less the perception stays the same: Red : Excitement, danger, anger, passion; Blue: Relaxing, competent, masculine, hope; Yellow: Happiness, inexpensiveness; Green: Relaxing, envy, environment-friendly; Purple : Luxury, power, sophistication; Brown : Masculine, ruggedness; Pink : Feminine, sincerity, sophistication; Grey : Neutral, competent, dull; Black: Grief, sophistication, death; White : Purity, innocence, peace.

Certain colours become iconic only due to the power of marketing. Often, colours become synonymous with a brand, such that it becomes difficult to picture the brand in a different colour scheme. In this way, the colour becomes the brand's trademark, its distinguishing factor serves as a source of familiarity for people. The bright 'Coca-Cola red' so deeply engraved in a consumer's mind is not a single shade of red, but rather a combination of three different reds (Pixartprinting, 2019). The turquoise shade on the boxes of renowned jewellery company Tiffany has been dubbed 'Tiffany blue', so much so that seeing the colour itself one can recognize the brand. Purple's most recognizable association with a brand, is undoubtedly Cadbury, who by adopting the rich shade made it inseparable from its branding (Carson, 2020). 'Millennial pink' became immensely popular in 2017, but how this soft shade of pink became a defining colour for a new generation can be traced back to only advertisers who adopted this shade and created its familiarity with the public.

There are innumerable examples all around of brands and companies using colour psychology, and how it subconsciously conditions buyers. Colours like yellow, orange and red are popular choices for fast food restaurants as they attract attention, excite customers and increase hunger and appetite (Singh, 2006). Yellow and

orange are associated with 'inexpensiveness', and both colours as well as red are associated with 'excitement'. In a scientific sense, these colours have longer wavelength, can be noticed from afar and associated with heat or warmth. Thus colour meanings often stem from a logical, or a historical source. Purple denotes 'luxury' and 'power', since in the ancient times purple was a rare and expensive dye used only by the royalty. Hence purple is often used on luxury products or are used to evoke a sense of luxury, for example the Cadbury purple. Coca-Cola's distinctive red packaging matches the purpose of the product, ie. an energizing drink as well as being easily noticeable. Often blue, grey and black are the common 'corporate colours' which depict the business as formal, competent and reliable. A more successful case of redesigning is the 'Project Blue' by Pepsi in 1996. Pepsi decided to change its packaging from predominantly red to an electric blue in order to stand out against its biggest competitor Coca-Cola which was famous for its bright red design. This helped to boost its sales, and now the blue Pepsi can is as iconic as Coca-Cola's red.

### **Conclusion**

The effect of colour psychology on consumer behavior, i.e how colours can impact and influence customers in their buying decisions has been incessantly a topic of discussion among marketing researchers. However, colour is an integral factor in a customer's decision process, and by properly conducting research on colour theory and psychology, brands are able to use colours effectively in their marketing strategy. By understanding the importance of colour psychology in the marketing arena as well as daily life, brands are able to promote their products and thus capture a larger market share. Since it is a psychological concept, it is influenced heavily by variables such as mood, behavior, age, gender, etc. These variables affect how colour is perceived and its relation to the product being marketed. Hence, brands have to use colour strategically to attract their target customer base as well as set their business apart from competitors. Hence, any brand/business should conduct a thorough colour research and analysis before deciding on what colour to use for its branding, packaging or store. The demographic composition of the target market, their cultural values and their expectations are factors which play a key role in their decision process also affect how they perceive colours and thus companies should keep these factors in mind when marketing. By conducting a thorough colour research and applying it effectively, brands will be able to boost their sales performance and enhance their brand image and personality.

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